

# **HANGING ROCK STATE PARK PARK PROFILE**

## **PARK PURPOSE STATEMENT**

Hanging Rock and the Sauratown Mountains are dominant landmarks in the northwest Piedmont province. The natural beauty of the mountain vistas and spectacular waterfalls so inspired the local residents that they supported placing the area in public ownership. Hanging Rock State Park was established in 1936 when the Winston-Salem Foundation, a local philanthropic organization, sold the property to the State of North Carolina for ten dollars. The reverter clause in the deed specified that the property was conveyed “upon the condition that a state or national park be constructed.” A citizens’ group and local politicians supported the state park’s completion in cooperation with the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The combination of significant natural resources, breathtaking scenic panoramas and attractive visitor facilities make Hanging Rock State Park one of North Carolina’s premier parks.

Hanging Rock State Park’s significant geological resources are a consequence of its location in the Sauratown Mountains, a ridge line separated from the Blue Ridge Mountains. The mountains were formed by a 200-foot-thick layer of erosion-resistant quartzite that became exposed as the surrounding land weathered away, leaving prominent monadnocks. The erosion, combined with a gradual uplifting of the rock, produced the Sauratown window (anticlinorium), which exposes rocks that would otherwise be hidden beneath the rocks of the surrounding Piedmont terrain. The exposed quartzite creates numerous large outcrops and cliffs, including Moore’s Knob, Devil’s Chimney, Wolf Rock and Hanging Rock. At some of the outcrops, the steep terrain and mountain streams combine to form outstanding waterfalls. Flexible sandstone (itacolumite) is found only in the Sauratown Mountains. The park preserves some of the best examples of flexible sandstone, which is formed with interlocking quartz and mica flakes.

The park’s significant biological resources are typified by the presence of natural communities normally located in the mountains. These disjunct montane communities include Low Elevation Rocky Summit, Montane Acidic Cliff, Carolina Hemlock Bluff, Pine-Oak/Heath and Chestnut Oak Forest. The three registered natural areas that have been designated are the Moore’s Knob/Cook’s Wall Natural Area, the Hanging Rock Summit Natural Area and the Cascade Creek Natural Area. In addition, the park contains seven rare plant species, including witch-alder and Bradley’s spleenwort, as well as two special animal species, Wehrle’s salamander and the brown elfin butterfly.

The striking contrast between the Sauratown Mountains, which rise to over 2500 feet, and the rolling Piedmont landscape creates the park’s most significant scenic resource. Moore’s Knob, the highest peak in the range, rises more than 1700 feet above the surrounding land. The views available to park visitors from the mountain cliffs are the park’s most notable scenic resource. Picturesque cascades and waterfalls, including Window Falls, Hidden Falls, Tory’s Den Falls and the Upper and Lower Cascade Falls are the most significant natural water features. The lake impoundment has also become a significant scenic area. The clear water lake, with its wooded shoreline and Moore’s Knob visible in the distance, provides a unique mountain vista.

Significant recreational resources include both natural and developed resources supporting many opportunities for natural resource oriented recreation. Interpretation and education are emphasized because of the park’s natural significance and proximity to population centers. The park’s extensive undeveloped areas provide excellent opportunities to experience a natural setting predominated by the forces of nature. Extensive mountain terrain is available for hiking. Scenic cliffs and waterfalls serve as hiking trail

destinations while all trails provide opportunities to view wildlife. The Dan River offers canoeing and fishing opportunities. Cook's Wall and Moore's Wall are sheer rock surfaces suitable for rock climbing.

A bowl-like area, rimmed by Moore's Knob and Wall, Cook's Wall and Hanging Rock Ridge, contains slopes suitable for visitor facilities. The Civilian Conservation Corps established the first access road to this area and then developed a lake impoundment for swimming, fishing and boating, a large stone bathhouse and a picnic shelter. These CCC facilities create the park's distinctive architectural character. A wide range of overnight opportunities were added later, including family camping, group camping and cabins.

The CCC structures have become significant historic resources because of their architecture and their connection to the federal public works programs during the Great Depression. The bathhouse was placed on the Register of National Historic Places in 1991. Significant prehistoric archaeologic resources have not yet been discovered due to limited investigation. The Sauras, a Native American tribe, had a village on the Dan River in Stokes County until the end of the 17th century. The tribe used the river as a transportation corridor, and artifacts probably remain.

Hanging Rock was authorized as a state park so that its valuable scenic, archaeological, geological, recreational, and biological values could be protected. The Division of Parks and Recreation is charged with preserving these values and providing park experiences that promote pride in and understanding of North Carolina's natural heritage.

### **PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEME**

**Geology of Hanging Rock:** The geologic formation known as Hanging Rock is a quartzite monadnock located at the eastern end of the Sauratown Mountain Range. Educational activities emphasize the theories explaining the formation of the park's geologic features.

### **STATISTICS**

Visitation (1998)	455,879
Operating Budget (FY 98-99)	\$ 662,158
Revenue (FY 98-99)	\$ 245,086

### **VISITOR FACILITIES**

Boat rentals (rowboat, canoe)	Cabins (6 units)
Primitive group camping (8 sites)	Picnicking (2 areas, 137 tables, 3 shelters)
Lake swimming (bathhouse, concession stand)	Tent and trailer campsites (73 sites, showers, no hookups)
8 Hiking trails (15.5 miles total)	Lake fishing
Drinking water	Rock climbing
Visitor center	Bridle/hiking trail (3.9 miles)
Exhibit hall	

## CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION NEEDS

1	The <b>Hidden Falls/Window Falls trail</b> project will reconstruct the entire trail. Eroded sections will be regraded and filled and 35 water bars will be placed. Two inches of rock screenings will be placed throughout as a trail tread.	\$ 697,715
2	The <b>Lower Cascades trail, access, and residence</b> project (land dependent) entails the complete relocation of the existing trail head parking and the trail itself. A 1000 ft. access road and 30 car parking area will be developed, a trail will be constructed, stairs and railings will be used for access control and user protection, and a kiosk with displays will be provided at the trail head.	708,109
3	The <b>Hanging Rock and Moores Wall Loop trails</b> project recommends reconstructing 4.2 miles of the Moores Wall Loop trail with some rerouting, filling, placement of 50 water bars and topping with 2 in. stone screenings. Extensive hand work will be necessary on the Hanging Rock Trail, upper section, to construct approximately 1000 stone steps.	457,236
4	The <b>group camp and family campground improvements</b> project will renovate the 8 group campsites; grade, fill, and landscaping to eliminate site erosion; upgrade sanitary facilities through construction of a small washhouse, well, and septic field; and expand parking by 15 spaces to accommodate 35 vehicles. The family campground will be improved by demolishing the old washhouse and replacing it with a modern, ADA accessible washhouse.	628,866
5	The <b>Moores Wall climbing access area</b> project will construct an 2000 ft. access road, park gate and sign, signage, a 30 car parking lot, a small flush toilet, well, septic field, kiosk and displays, 1500 ft. trail to Moores Wall, public telephone, and ranger residence.	725,750
6	The <b>rental cabins</b> project will construct 4 ADA accessible cabins to complete the master plan recommendations and also upgrade the original 6 cabins to provide ADA accessibility, porches, and heating and air conditioning. Project involves an 800 ft. access road, 2 parking spaces per cabin, landscaping, utility line extensions, kitchen equipment, tools, and furniture.	1,116,440
7	The <b>building renovations and demolitions</b> project will renovate 4 park structures up to current building standards and demolish 6 buildings not in use.	308,997
8	The <b>lake improvements</b> project will provide masonry repairs to the dam, replace the swim platform, replace the dam gate, rework the surface drainage system to divert runoff away from the lake, and improve the boathouse to provide for handicapped accessibility.	308,580
9	The <b>main powerline</b> project will bury the main powerline underground to protect the line from ice storm damage and improve park aesthetics.	155,914
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<hr/> \$5,125,607

## DEDICATED NATURE PRESERVE

**Moore's Knob-Cook's Wall Dedicated Nature Preserve:** This area encompasses 1045 acres and includes the vertical quartzite ridges and monadnocks found at Moore's Wall and Cook's Wall. These ridges form spectacular escarpments of exposed quartzite that rise more than 200 feet above the surrounding area. Other significant natural resources in the area include the substantial bear oak population at Moore's Wall, and the presence at Cook's Wall of itacolumite, a very rare flexible sandstone.

**Cascade Creek Dedicated Nature Preserve:** This area covers 120 acres and features a two mile long gorge. Its unique features include a dramatic contrast in soil and habitat types that results in the rare occurrence of Carolina and Canadian hemlock growing side by side. The area supports several disjunct communities more commonly associated with mountainous ecosystems and includes particularly well developed Spray Cliff and Carolina Hemlock Bluff communities.

**Hanging Rock Dedicated Nature Preserve:** This area covers 395 acres and includes the quartzite monadnock from which the park takes its name. This area supports high quality, disjunct examples of montane communities and species and is one of several sites in North Carolina where the rare Wehrle's salamander is known to live. Sightings of ravens above Hanging Rock ridge are quite common.

## FUTURE LAND ACQUISITION NEEDS

Completion of the Hanging Rock State Park master plan will require the acquisition of 3,009 acres. Land acquisition objectives are to eliminate partial inholdings, to provide a route and access for a segment of the statewide Mountains-to-Sea Trail, and to protect and buffer the natural and scenic features of the park. Portions of Ruben Mountain, Flat Shoals Mountain, and the escarpment known as Moore's Wall and Cook's Wall are still privately owned.

Master Plan Total Acreage	9,563 acres
Current Park Acreage	<u>6,554 acres</u>
<b>Acquisition Needs</b>	<b>3,009 acres</b>

### 2000 STAFF POSITIONS

Permanent		Seasonal		Peak Load	
Park Superintendent III	1	Park Attendant	4	Park Attendant	3
Park Ranger III	1	Assistant Park Ranger	1	Lifeguard	2
Park Ranger II	2	Chief Lifeguard	1	Bathhouse Operator	4
Park Ranger I	2	Lifeguard	5	Refreshment Stand Clerk	2
Maintenance Mechanic IV	1	Bathhouse Manager II	1	Office Assistant II	1
Maintenance Mechanic III	1	Bathhouse Operator I	1		
Maintenance Mechanic II	1	Refreshment Stand Manger I	1		
Office Assistant III	2	Refreshment Stand Clerk	1		
		General Utility Worker	1		
		Office Assistant II	1		

### PROPOSED STAFF ADDITIONS

Permanent		Seasonal		Peak Load	
		Park Attendant	1	Bathhouse Operator	1